



PRESS RELEASE

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FLORIDA SET TO HOST INAGURAL HIGH SCHOOL BEACH NATIONAL CHAMPS!

Florida Region of USA Volleyball and Sunshine State Athletics will partner to produce a national high school beach championship event in 2019.

Eustis, FL – June 1, 2018 – Today the Florida Region of USA Volleyball, in partnership with the Sunshine State Athletic Conference (SSAC), announces a new high school beach national championships beginning in 2019. This new event will be held on May 10-12, 2019 at Hickory Point Beach Sand Volleyball Complex in Tavares, FL and will facilitate the growing level of interest and participation in beach volleyball at the grass roots level across the US.

Hickory Point Beach is a 21 court state-of-the-art sand volleyball complex in Central Florida that currently hosts many USAV, high school, and collegiate beach events annually. The complex recently announced the addition of a new building, in partnership with the local county government, which will open in early 2019 to support beach volleyball events. The new 4,000 sf support building will have showers, locker rooms, along with a medical room for participating teams and athletes. Additionally, it will have public restrooms, a concession area, a VIP area, an official's locker room, a viewing deck and multi-purpose meeting space.

The SSAC is one of two high school sport associations in the US that has officially sanctioned high school beach volleyball and offers a state championship annually. The other is the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA), which partnered with the Arizona Region of USA Volleyball and launched the sport in 2012. The SSAC officially partnered with the Florida Region of USA Volleyball in 2016 to kick off the effort. Since adding high school beach volleyball in Florida, the SSAC has achieved over 100% growth each year. Due to the growth in 2018, conference championships were added in Florida to identify the top public and private high schools in each region of the state.

The President of the SSAC, **Stuart Weiss** stated, "The success of our girl's beach volleyball league since its inception in 2016 has been amazing! We believe that our High School Beach National Championship event will help continue the growth of beach volleyball, both inside and outside the State of Florida. This event will offer the opportunity for student athletes from around the country to come and experience the excitement and passion of this awesome sport!"

Since very few states currently offer organized or sanctioned high school beach volleyball in the US, the new national championship event will offer divisions for both teams and individual pairs. This means that high schools in states which do not currently offer any sanctioned high school beach activity can participate in the pairs division in 2019. High school athletes wishing to compete in the event must attend the same school, must be endorsed by their high school or their respective USA Volleyball region office, and must meet all eligibility requirements. There will also be two divisions available for teams. Private school teams will consist of three pairs and public school teams will consist of five pairs. This format will allow any high schools in the US interested in competing for a national title to participate. Teams will compete in pool play on day one, a challenge round on day two, and bracket play on day three. All three divisions will crown a national champion at the end of the event.

Steve Bishop, Florida Region Executive Director & President commented, "This new beach volleyball national championship event for high schools is the next logical step in the progression of this sport. Our hope is that this will encourage other states to seek out their respective USAV regional volleyball association to partner on this initiative as was previously done

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with great success in Arizona and Florida. We know that high school aged athletes are playing more beach volleyball across the US as this is evidenced by the continually increasing number of beach events each year. Since the NCAA officially launched their DI National Beach Championships in 2016 and the NJCAA officially launched beach volleyball as an official sport beginning in 2019, we believe that the timing is right to launch a national championship event for high school athletes in the US.”

About Florida Region of USA Volleyball:

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is a 501c3 non-profit that began operations in the 1960’s and was officially incorporated in 1982 to promote the sport of volleyball and to create competitive playing opportunities for volleyball enthusiasts of all ages throughout the State of Florida. The Florida Region is one of the 40 regional volleyball associations under the umbrella of USA Volleyball and currently serves 14,000 members. Indoor and outdoor programming is available for adults, juniors, coaches and officials. The Florida Region of USA Volleyball headquarters is located in Eustis, FL. Additional information on the Florida Region can be found at: www.FloridaVolleyball.org.

About Sunshine State Athletic Conference:

The Sunshine State Athletic Conference – Florida’s premier independent athletic conference – formed in 2008 as an alternative for Florida independent sports programs. The conference has grown into a multiple sport athletic organization made up of private and charter schools located throughout Florida. In 2017, the SSAC debuted its girls beach volleyball league – the first of its kind in Florida for the competitive sport. Since its debut, the league continues to thrive, with more than 40 teams participating in its second season, and led to the SSAC partnering with the USA Volleyball Association to host the upcoming National Girls Beach Volleyball Championship. SSAC’s focus is to promote good sportsmanship and fair play, and student-athlete safety. The goal of the conference is to provide members with a safe, equitable, and enjoyable athletic experience. Additional information on the SSAC can be found at: www.sunshinestateathletics.com.

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